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ABSTRACT

U. S. director of career education, Kenneth B. Hoyt, is interviewed on the subject of the relationship of business and industry to career education in the schools. He urges the business-industry community to collaborate with career education implementation in the schools. As part of this collaborative effort, businesses are asked to (1) provide a learning laboratory and opportunities for observation, work experience, and work study to students, and also to teachers, counselors, and administrators; (2) serve as resource persons in the classroom to show, demonstrate, and discuss the career implications of school subject matter; (3) actively cooperate with the placement problem; (4) donate equipment which can make the school more relevant; (5) urge educators to "do" career education; and (6) sit on advisory and policy committees regarding career education in order to move from a concept to a program of action. Questions of why career education has come about, public demand for career education, and the relationship of career education to the evolution of a post-industrial society are discussed. (TA)

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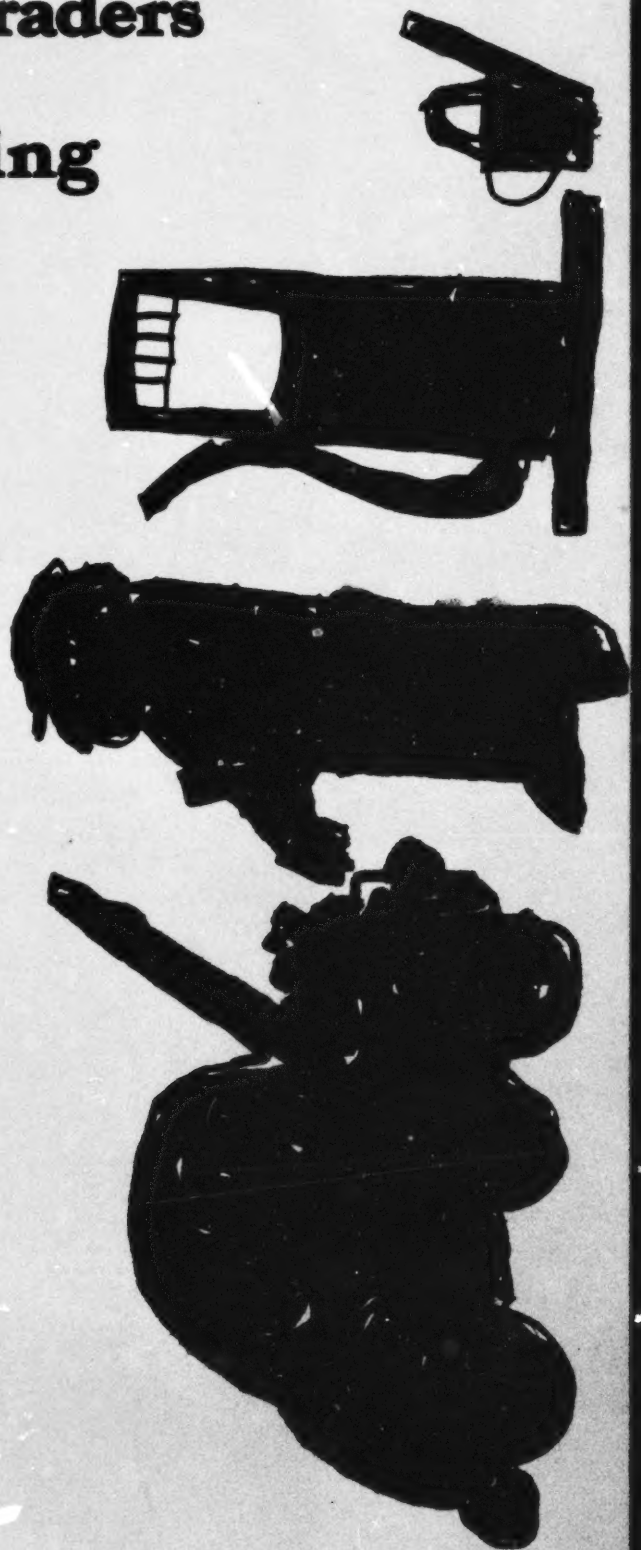
Preparing Third Graders for Something Beyond Fourth Grade



U.S. Director of Career Education Shares the Responsibility With Business

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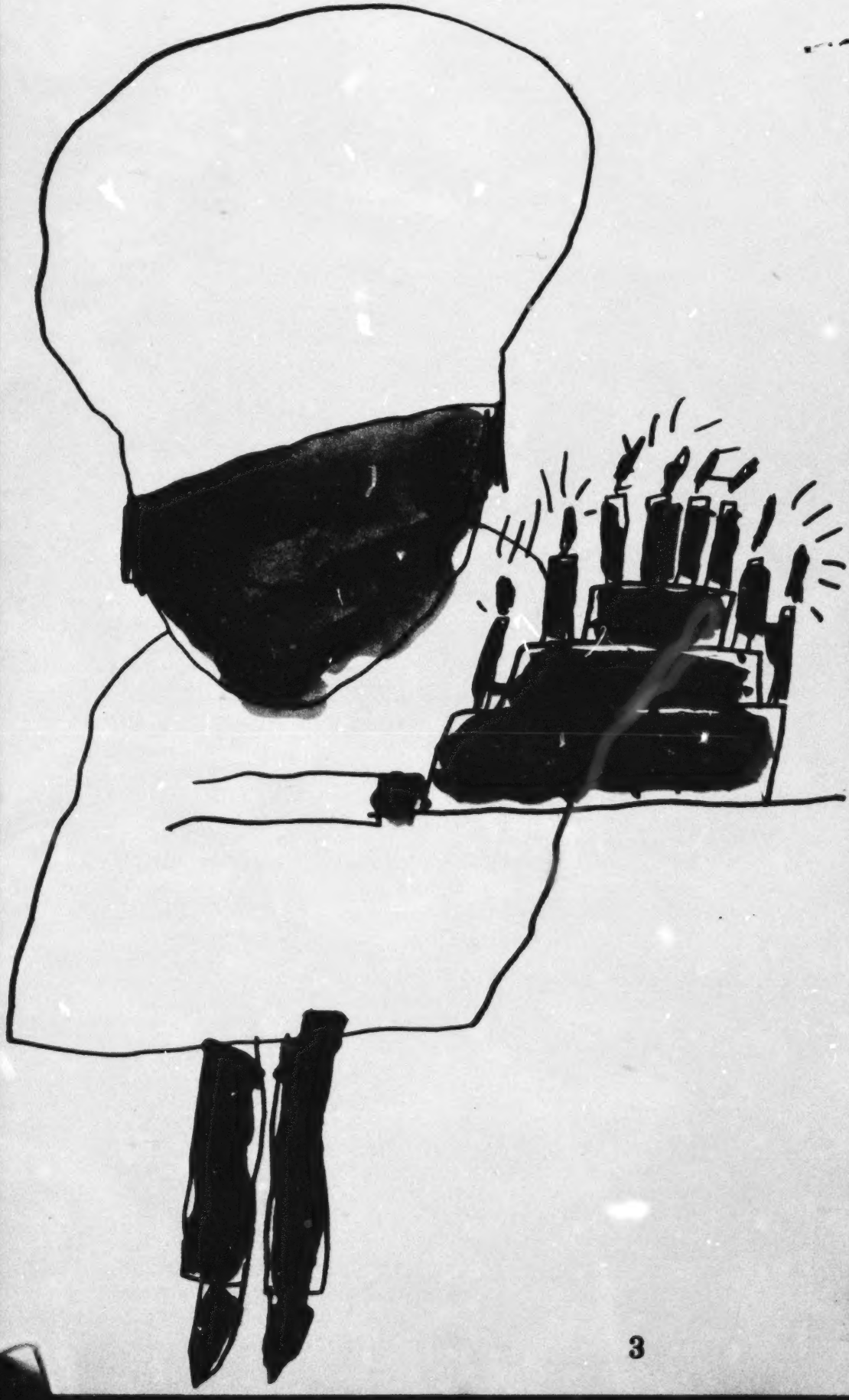

Sometimes called the
largest industry, education i
nearly a third of all U.S. citi
students, teachers and adm
tors. The American people
close to $90 billion each yea
levels of education.

But whatever goes into
tion, what comes out is eve
important: citizens, emp
consumers, parents, leaders

Such talk about the imp
of education may seem supe
to Bell System managers wh
been instrumental in the suc
the company's longstanding
relations programs. Studen
teachers have availed thems
telephone training units,
booklets, science kits, tours
phone offices, Western E
plants and Bell Labs facilit
yond materials and tours, tel
people have made themselve
able to the classrooms of th
munities we serve.

The advent of the career
tion movement might sugg
foresight brought Bell peop
the classrooms of American
But more likely it was simp
mon sense, the realization t
ter understanding betwee
selves and a younger gen
would benefit all of us.

The concept of career edu
in fact, hangs like a pendulu
business support. As career
tion spreads, many busines
being asked to help educa
ways that aren't so differen
what the Bell System has d
years—with some changes
phasis.

The idea behind career ed
is simply that all classroom
whether academic or vocati
nature, should visibly relate
individual student's post-sc
ambitions. Dr. Kenneth B
U.S. director of career edu
points out in the followi
Telephone Magazine intervi
career education has two co
that students see the relat
between their studies and w
form of work they will eve
seek; and that work, becaus
a basic human need, should
a meaningful part of eve
vidual's life.

Dr. Hoyt, a professor of

tion at the University of Maryland, is on loan to the U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare. He is one of the foremost theorists and proponents of career education in the nation, having authored or co-authored five books on the subject. He has also published about 130 articles and other professional writings.

To set the stage, Dr. Hoyt, why has career education come about?

HOYT: The call for career education has come from students, parents and the general public who perceive a need for education to bear some relationship to what youngsters are going to do when they leave the educational system.

We've had a situation for years where schooling and employment have been considered two separate worlds. Our educational institutions have operated under an assumption that the best way to get youngsters ready for the real world is to lock them up in a schoolhouse and keep them away from it. Meanwhile, our business-industry community has operated under an assumption that preparation for work is the sole responsibility of the schools. And then we wonder why youth have trouble making the transition from one world to the other.

All sorts of students have raised the question, "Why should I study? What good will it do me?" And all sorts of teachers have responded by saying, "Shut up and study. The reason you're going to school is so you can go to school." In other words, the kids are in third grade to get ready for the fourth and in high school so they can go to college.

I think the public has caught on to the fact that the purpose of education cannot be education. The purpose of education must be preparation for something–preparation for living or for making a living or for enjoying life. But it's got to be preparation for something.

Have employers also been involved in the call for career education?

HOYT: Certainly. Employers today complain that the young people who come to them are not well prepared for the world of work. They don't have the basic academic skills –reading, writing and arithmetic. They don't have good work habits or positive work attitudes. The employers say there are a lot more youngsters looking for jobs than looking for work. And the employers would like to see that situation turned around.

Well, educators would too. But we can't turn it around unless you work with us. Career education has been pictured from the outset as a collaborative effort–not just a cooperative effort–among the educational system, the business-industry community, the professional and government communities, the home and family.

Career education involves two basic concerns that all of us must share. One is the relationship between education and work. And second, we are equally concerned with making work a meaningful part of the total life-style of every individual–work paid or unpaid. In other words, our concerns include not only having a kid say, "I'm getting ready to be a worker," but also, "I am a worker right now. My job is the second grade." All the work habits that pertain to the world of paid employment ought to be practiced by the student right now.

Are you saying that after all the money this country has spent on education, our school system has been a failure up to now?

HOYT: No, American education in the past has done what the public asked it to do. The public asked for extended schooling and American education did that. But until now, the public hadn't asked that preparation for work be a major goal of American education. Now the educational system is trying to change itself to reflect this new public demand.

Through what channels has the public expressed this demand?

HOYT: You can see it in any of the national opinion polls. Look at the recent Gallup polls on public attitudes toward education. Look at the Harris survey. In almost any public opinion survey, both students and parents are saying, "We want more career planning and career direction." It's very consistent and very persistent.

Is the demand for career education related to the evolution of a postindustrial society?

HOYT: Definitely. The postindustrial society–with its orientation toward service, information and technology–forces education and work into closer and closer relationships. It makes for rapidity of occupational change, and every time a person retrains, he needs a different set of skills. Specific job skills become a prerequisite for entry into almost any occupation, yet general career skills are more important for everyone. We're talking about general preparation for adaptability, readiness to deal with the certainty of uncertainty that most youth are facing today.

Should we redefine "school age" in that case? Is adult or continuing education a part of career education?

HOYT: Sure it is. Career education—where it has existed—has been mostly kindergarten through 12th grade. But we think of it as going completely through the university system and all of adult and continuing education. We certainly hope to implement it in all those places. Career education for adults has to do both with retraining people for occupational change and also with productive use of leisure time.

Would you explain the stages of career education through 12th grade?

HOYT: The elementary years are primarily awareness years. We want elementary youngsters to be aware of the economic, the sociological and the psychological significance of work in our society. We're not trying to teach these young kids about specific occupations. Rather, we want to make them aware of work in three ways:

First, we're trying to motivate them to learn the basic skills better. We simply must increase the abilities of our students in reading, writing and arithmetic. We use career implications as a way of motivating them to learn the subject matter.

So you're showing elementary students how working people use these basic skills?

HOYT: That's right. And secondly, we're already trying to build general career skills in the form of good work habits.

Finally, we're exposing them to a wide variety of work values—reasons why people work. For most individuals, the basic personal value system is largely developed prior to age 12. The schools have helped students develop all sorts of values over the years—except work values. We want to put work values into that constellation of personal values that school systems teach.

That's the awareness stage of career education for the elementary years. Then we go into an exploration phase in the junior high and perhaps part of the senior high years. Students explore what is possible. They get an orderly view of the world of work and the major classifications of occupations.

This exploration phase may, depending on the individual, continue even into the first year or so of college. Or it may wind up by the 10th grade or so when the student goes into a preparation phase for a chosen occupation.

But everything depends on the individual student. There aren't many clear cutoff points—like this stage ends at sixth grade, the next at ninth grade and again at 12th grade. That's an oversimplified notion of the phases of career education.

Because of mid-career changes, some people may go through this process several times. Career maturation is not analogous to physical maturation. It isn't like childhood, adolescence and adulthood—which you only go through once. Occupational childhood and occupational adolescence may be experienced several times in an individual's life.

We've already mentioned how career education may radically alter our idea of "school age." What are some other major revisions we may see in the educational system?

HOYT: The changes championed by career education include things like year-round school (with multiple departure points to avoid mass entry of graduates into the job market at one time); open entry/open exit education; adults and young people learning together; performance evaluation (as an alternative to the credit-hour measurement of educational accomplishment); doing away with the rigid tracking systems for academic, general and vocational curricula; credit for work done outside the classroom and having work experience regarded as a general educational method for all students. I see all of these as outgrowths of career education.

"Open entry/open exit"—that sounds as if there'll be no such thing as a school dropout.

HOYT: I have said for 15 years that the term "dropout" is obsolete. The term made sense when there was a point in time that you were finished with school. Well, most of us will be going back to school at some time or other for most of our lives. I

think the term "dropout" is already conceptually obsolete; one of my crusades is to make it operationally obsolete.

What's the status of career education regarding funding and putting the concept into practice?

HOYT: Congress passed public law 93-380 last year providing for the first time a mandate for career education. Until that time career education was strictly a prerogative of the executive branch of the federal government.

We now have 10 state legislatures that have passed state laws on career education, most of them with some money behind them. We have 19 states with legislation in the hopper this session. We have more than 30 state departments of education which have formally endorsed career education. There are career education coordinators in 46 of the 50 state departments of education.

But I think it's significant that the real action has been in the local communities. Of the 17,000 school districts in the United States, fewer than 500 have received any federal funds for experimental programs in career education. Yet over 5,000 districts have active career education programs this year. That ought to tell you something. All this has happened in less than four years. I know of no other educational reform effort that has caught on so fast with so few dollars behind it.

What are some of the major criticisms of career education and how do you answer them?

HOYT: One is that career education invites external control of our schools. It'll let the business-industry community as well as the home and family have a voice in the educational system. Educators may not get to run education all by themselves. My answer to that is, it's about time. The days of educational isolationism are past. I don't think we can get the massive involvement we need from the business community if they have no voice in what goes on in career education. I welcome that voice.

Some people say career education will lower educational standards. I say no, we're not lowering standards. We're creating standards that are feasible for all the individuals in the schools. The standards that they're worried about are the traditional academic standards which said that every kid who finish[es] high school should be qualified to go to college. We don't think every kid who finishes high school *needs* to be qualified for college. We're seeking to open up options and give youngsters assistance in decision making.

Then instead of failing on an academic level, these students are...

HOYT: *Succeeding* in meeting standards that are realistic for them.

Another criticism is that career education is anti-intellectual. I say absolutely not. We're not against intellectualism, but we are against intellectual snobbery. We're opposed to those who believe that all things worth knowing are found in books, or that the people who go to school the longest know the most.

But the most unfair criticism that has been voiced against career education is that it is antihumanistic in its nature and goals. These critics seem to believe that career education is trying to prepare youth to accept dehumanizing conditions that still exist in some jobs today. On the contrary, career education is concerned about a very basic *human* need—namely, the need to accomplish and achieve something. Sure, we emphasize good work habits and attitudes, and procedures for obtaining and holding a job. We do this to make the individual capable of living and working in our free enterprise system which, at its roots, emphasizes individual initiative, effort and creativity. Career education clearly seeks to restore public confidence in education and the free enterprise system. We see nothing antihumanistic about such goals.

Exactly what are you asking business to do as its part of this collaborative effort?

HOYT: We're asking you to do these things: First, provide a learning laboratory. Provide opportunities for observation, work experience and work study to students and those who educate students—includ-

ing teachers, counselors and administrators.

Second, we're asking you to serve as resource persons in the classroom. I mean actually come into the classroom and show, demonstrate, talk about the career implications of school subject matter. Why is it important that this third-grade class learn what they're studying today? What does it mean in terms of your work?

We're asking business to work with us collaboratively on the placement problem. We are not going to solve this problem by saying the school does the placement or the state employment service does the placement. We have to work together on this. Who can teach job-seeking, job-getting and job-holding skills better than those people who are working?

We're asking for the donation of equipment which can make the school more relevant—anything that will help us help kids in their career decision-making process.

We're also asking the community to continue putting pressure on educators to do career education. If the business community really needs youngsters who are better prepared for work, they've got to keep saying so. There are all sorts of reasons why educators won't change. Educators are like people. They resist change. The pressure has to stay on them.

We're asking you to sit on advisory and policy committees regarding career education. How can we go from a concept to a program of action without the expertise of the business community?

Dr. Hoyt, it seems safe to say that in most of the communities served by the Bell System, our company is recognized as a leader in making our resources available to educators.

HOYT: There's no doubt about that.

Well, the fact that we're well known to educators may encourage them to call on us often for classroom speakers and other career education help. But isn't there a danger from the educator's point of view that one company may do too much?

HOYT: That's right. We have to have variety. I see an outfit like Bell Telephone setting an example and urging other businesses to get in the act. And we need not only large corporations, but also the mom-and-pop grocery stores and other small businesses. This is the only long-run solution. The schools don't need your company doing the job all by itself. I suggest you spend some of your energy trying to get other businesses to do their part.

Through the local business organizations, for instance?

HOYT: Yes, in fact, the United States Chamber of Commerce has encouraged state and local chambers to encourage wide segments of the business community to participate in career education programs. But the U.S. Chamber is only one of the organizations supporting career education. You can talk about the National Alliance of Businessmen, the National Association for Industry-Education Cooperation, Junior Achievement, Kiwanis, Rotary and Lions Clubs. These are all business-oriented groups that are hoping to and can make significant contributions to career education.

Are there any words of caution you would offer to business people regarding career education?

HOYT: I think the biggest mistake you could make is waiting for the schools to come to you. It doesn't make any difference where the initiative comes from as long as an initiative is present. I talk to a lot of business groups that say, in very general ways, they're in favor of career education. I say, if you're in favor of it, then *you* have a responsibility to do something about it. Career education cannot go without you. It's the only educational concept I know that starts with the assumption that the schools can't do it by themselves. □